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UNRWA to continue rations

DAMASCUS, Jan. 19 (R)—The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) has agreed to continue providing full rations to its dependents for at least three months, a senior Palestinian spokesman said here today. The agency announced last year it would have to reduce some supplies because of a multi-million dollar budget deficit. Abdul Mohsen Abu Maizer, a member of the PLO Executive Committee, said the accord had been reached during talks he had with UNRWA Director Peter Macilheny in Damascus last night. Mr. Abu Maizer said the PLO would use all its influence to help raise funds for the agency, but that it would not cooperate as long as the threat of cutting supplies was maintained.

AMMAN, SATURDAY JANUARY 20, 1979 - SAFAR 21, 1399

Price: Jordan 50 fils; Syria 50 piastres; Lebanon 75 piastres; Saudi Arabia 1 riyal; UAE 1 dirham; Great Britain 25 pence.

In 10-point resolution 1.5 million Iranians urge Islamic republic

TEHRAN, Jan. 19 (R)—More than 1.5 million Iranians today adopted a 10-point resolution calling for an Islamic republic and warning the world not to interfere in Iran's internal affairs. The resolution, adopted by a massive demonstration in Tehran, called for the establishment of an Islamic republic based on the principles of the Quran and the example of the Prophet Muhammad. It also demanded the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iran and the cessation of foreign interference in its internal affairs. The resolution was adopted by a vote of 10-0, with 1.5 million Iranians participating in the demonstration. The resolution also called for the establishment of a new constitution based on Islamic principles and the election of a new assembly to draft the constitution. The resolution was adopted by a vote of 10-0, with 1.5 million Iranians participating in the demonstration.

Israel attacks Lebanon Massive ground, air and artillery attack

AYISHIYA, Lebanon, Jan. 19 (Agencies)—Twenty-one people were killed and 13 wounded in an Israeli ground, air and artillery attack in South Lebanon today, a Palestinian Commando spokesman said.

The attack was directed against this tiny mountain village and the settlement of Amoun, both about seven kilometres from the Israeli border. A senior Palestinian commander, Abu Jihad, told Reuters that after several hours of fighting the Israelis were forced to call in helicopters to evacuate their wounded. In Amoun, the Israelis destroyed a camp of the rebel Lebanese Arab Army (LAA), which is allied with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and at least seven LAA troops were killed. Commanders here from Fatah, the biggest Palestinian group in the PLO, told Reuters the Israelis launched their attack from the nearby stronghold of Marjayoun. Planes made strafing runs and artillery pounded the area as about 100 Israeli troops advanced on this village over the craggy mountains around Ayishiya and Amoun. The Israeli push was halted about a kilometre away. "Our soldiers in forward positions saw the Israelis coming and opened fire," one Palestinian said. A Reuters correspondent near Ayishiya saw signs of heavy fighting and blood-stained bandages on the ground near an abandoned Israeli uniform. While Israeli reports said the attacks were aimed at the PLO, the heaviest casualties appeared to have been suffered by the LAA. Military sources said the LAA troops had been taken by surprise in concrete bunkers in their camp at Amoun, situated on a hillside below the ruins of Beaufort Castle, a medieval Crusader fort. Four corpses blocked the smoke-blackened entrance of an LAA underground concrete bunker. Israeli shellfire had shattered two buildings nearby. The wife of a farmer picked through the ruins of her home, wailing for two relatives buried under the debris. On the single-track road leading north from Amoun to the main town in the area, Nabatiyah, two buildings were devastated by artillery fire. Shafik Awad, an elderly farmer, said two of his relatives—a man and young girl—were believed dead under the rubble of one house. In the southern port town of Tyre tonight, travellers reported Israeli shelling of the Burj al Shemali, a village including a Palestinian refugee camp, and a farm east of Tyre. There were no reports of casualties, but the travellers said palls of black smoke hung over the areas, apparently bombed from inside Israel. Outside the smouldering ruins of the second building stood a wrecked olive-green four wheel-drive vehicle of the type used by Palestinian guerrillas. But there was no indication whether it belonged to the PLO or whether there had been casualties there. The Israelis said they had preceded their attack with a half-hour artillery barrage—and the two buildings appeared to have been the targets. The small LAA camp below Beaufort Castle was in ruins. The only artillery piece there was an ageing field gun that had been blown up by explosives placed in the barrel. There was no sign of weapons in the jumble of corpses at the bunker entrance, set close to a village already battered from the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon last March. In Tel Aviv, Israel's Chief of Staff, Lt.-Gen. Rafael Eitan said his paratroopers and infantrymen footslogged in darkness 16 kilometres into South Lebanon and waded across the Litani river to destroy two Palestinian bases early today. He claimed at a press briefing that the Israelis killed between 20 and 25 men and destroyed buildings, equipment, arms and ammunition. Israel suffered only one casualty, a soldier slightly wounded in the leg by shrapnel, Gen. Eitan claimed. The Israelis brought back one prisoner who identified himself as a member of the LAA, according to the Israeli state radio.



With raised fists, demonstrators underline their support of an Islamic republic for Iran during a mass rally, Friday, called for by exiled religious leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. (AP wirephoto)

PLO restates wish for close ties

By Lee S. Tesdell
Special to the Jordan Times
DAMASCUS, Jan. 19 (J.T.)—The Palestine Liberation Organisation is "keen to have relations with Jordan," Mohammed Subieh, secretary general of the Palestine National Council, told the Jordan Times here today. "We unanimously accepted in principle to have these relations," he said. "Now it depends on how Jordan will react." On the subject of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's forthcoming visit to meet with His Majesty King Hussein, Subieh said, "I think he will be there soon." While the 14th annual session of the 301-member PNC was meeting at a trade union headquarters across the street from the Meridien Hotel in Damascus, Israeli troops attacked a Palestinian position in southern Lebanon. Asked whether the PLO would retaliate for the attack, spokesman Mahmud Labadi said: "It is not a question of retaliation. We are a resistance movement fighting to recover our homeland." "This means that such acts of Zionist aggression will not deter us from carrying on our struggle inside the occupied territories. The armed struggle will go on," he continued at his daily news conference. Subieh told the Jordan Times that both the Baghdad Conference meetings between His Majesty King Hussein and Chairman Arafat and the earlier meeting of the two men in northern Jordan had led to strengthening ties between the Jordanians and the PLO. The Palestinians are hopeful as well that the current Syrian-Iraqi accords unification moves will strengthen the Arab position against Israel. Conference sources, quoted by Reuters, said the debate within the PNC shows the unity of Palestinian groups around opposition to Camp David peace plans. The council, they reported, had approved a draft programme rejecting the notion of limited self rule on the West Bank and Gaza. Stepped up military actions against Israel were also called for, they said. In another unifying move, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine has apparently decided to rejoin the 15 member executive committee of the PLO. Mr. Labadi stressed that the PNC is a democratic organisation in which each member may express his or her views. This was confirmed to the Jordan Times by Mr. Subieh, who said that 160 members of the 301 will have made statements by the end of the approximately week-long conference.

Atherton still unsuccessful

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, Jan. 19 (R)—Prime Minister Menachem Begin met Special United States Envoy Alfred Atherton today and promised to present to his cabinet new American proposals on breaking the impasse on Israeli-Egyptian peace talks. Mr. Atherton arrived here earlier this week heading a delegation of legal experts to try to bridge gaps between Israeli and Egyptian positions on the wording of the treaty. Mr. Begin and the American diplomat would not disclose details of their discussion today, but the Israeli Premier told reporters the new ideas presented would be discussed by his cabinet, presumably during its weekly session on Sunday. Earlier today, for the fifth time this week, Mr. Atherton met the director-general of Mr. Begin's bureau, Dr. Eliahu Ben-Elissar, who heads the Israeli negotiating team. Cabinet sources said the entire series of talks revolved around three critical points in the proposed peace treaty worked out by Egyptian and Israeli delegations in Washington last November. On these points, the sources said, "Israel totally rejects Egyptian demands to link their bilateral treaty with a future solution of the Palestinian issue on the occupied West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza Strip." "The Israelis stress that the treaty with Egypt must take precedence over any past commitments made by Cairo to fellow Arab states." "While Egypt wants to preserve the right to aid an Arab state if it becomes subject to Israeli aggression, Israel argues that there must be a clear definition of the term aggression in the treaty. American official sources said Mr. Atherton was trying to find a way to define the term during his talks here. Another issue being raised is a proposal by Egypt to review security arrangements in the Sinai Desert five years after the conclusion of peace. Mr. Atherton will have a private dinner with Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan tonight. He is expected to leave on Sunday but U.S. officials said he may have another meeting with Israeli leaders before his departure.

UK 'virtually blockaded'

LONDON, Jan. 19 (R)—Snow-kick Britain, struggling with its worst industrial crisis in years, faces more strikes Monday by 1.1 million low-wage workers who do the nation's jobs. Ambulance crews will join lorry, and London ambulance drivers' spokesman Bill warned today: "This time it is determined that the capital take notice of what we are saying, and if that means lives lost it will be." A new trade union attempt to persuade 100,000 striking lorries to limit picketing did not with immediate success. Employers' organisation, Confederation of British Trade (CBI), said there was a "total blockade of the United Kingdom." CBI President John Green-borough wrote to Prime Minister James Callaghan urging him to declare a state of emergency. Yesterday Mr. Callaghan deferred calling a state of emergency to see if the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) could enforce striking drivers to follow a voluntary picketing code. The strikers have stopped the flow of food and raw materials by picketing docks and firms outside their dispute. Government ministers said it would take a few days to see whether truckers would obey the code and only picket firms involved in the dispute. A CBI spokesman said first reports today did not show a marked improvement and pickets were out in force—particularly in North England. It was clear the strike had not lived up to the worst fears of Chancellor of the Exchequer Denis Healey who three days ago predicted that some one million men would be laid off by the end of this week. Employers and officials said it was hard to estimate the number of lay-offs but the figure did exceed 150,000. Next Monday's "national day of action" had been coordinated by four trade unions pressing for huge pay hikes. In some cases they are demanding 40 and 50 per cent increases. Mr. Callaghan has been trying to keep wages rises down to five per cent but has said the low paid may have slightly more. Train drivers have scheduled another one-day national strike on Tuesday their third this month-and tomorrow travellers face disruption at London airport because of a stoppage by some ground staff. Nurses are claiming a 25 per cent increase. They have said they may take some industrial action but will never go on all-out strike. A public opinion poll today fuelled the ruling Labour Party's fear that the strike-crisis could lose Mr. Callaghan this year's election. It showed the party's standing had slipped further behind the opposition Conservative Party. The poll, in the Daily Telegraph, reported the Conservatives had a seven-and-a-half per cent lead with 49 per cent support compared to Labour's forty-one and a half.

WORLD NEWS ROUNDUP

Syria, UAE to sign judicial agreement
ABU DHABI, Jan. 19 (R)—Syrian Justice Minister Adib Al Nahaw arrived here today on a six-day official visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for talks to boost bilateral judicial cooperation, the official Emirates News Agency reported. The agency said Mr. Nahaw had paid tribute to UAE-Syrian relations and said that during his visit he would sign a judicial cooperation agreement between the two countries.

Biggest China-Australia wheat deal in 20 years
PEKING, Jan. 19 (R)—China has bought 2.5 million tonnes of wheat from Australia for shipment up to the end of December this year, Australian officials said today. In Melbourne Wheat Board Chairman Sir Leslie Price said the sale, worth an estimated 250 million dollars (285 million U.S. dollars), was the biggest deal made with China for nearly 20 years.

Patriarch to open Coptic church in Britain
CAIRO, Jan. 19 (R)—The Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Shenouda III, will inaugurate the first Orthodox Coptic church in Britain during a 12-day visit to London starting on Jan. 27, his office announced today. It said the Patriarch, the first Coptic Orthodox leader to visit Britain, will go on to Geneva on Feb. 7 for a two-day visit as guest of the World Council of Churches. There are about six million Copts in Egypt and many followers in Sudan and Ethiopia.

Paul Meurisse of French stage and screen dies
PARIS, Jan. 19 (R)—French stage and film actor Paul Meurisse died of a heart attack in Paris during the night, aged 65, hospital officials said today. He was rushed to the American Hospital at Neuilly after a performance at the Theatre des Arts-Hebertot last night. The son of a Dunkirk banker, he started his career in a Paris music-hall in 1936 and 20 years later became a member of France's Comedie Francaise. Paul Meurisse, one-time partner of singer Edith Piaf, was the star in countless theatrical shows, ranging from Moliere and Shakespearean plays to light boulevard comedies. He also acted in 84 films.

Dayan to visit France
OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, Jan. 19 (R)—Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan will pay a two-day official visit to France starting on Jan. 29 as the guest of French Foreign Minister Jean Francois-Poncet, the Foreign Ministry announced today.

Ethiopia, South Yemen want open, free Red Sea
NAIROBI, Jan. 19 (R)—The leaders of Ethiopia and South Yemen have issued a joint communique calling for the Red Sea to be kept open to international traffic and made a zone of peace. Addis Ababa Radio reported. The communique was issued last night at the end of a 10-day visit to Ethiopia by Ali Nasser Mohammed, President and Prime Minister of South Yemen. The countries, with strong political and military links with Moscow, control the two shores of the strategic Bab El Mandeb straits, the narrow southern opening of the Red Sea.

Israel sends Arab to jail for three life terms
TEL AVIV, Jan. 19 (R)—An Arab from the West Bank of Jordan was yesterday sentenced to three terms of life imprisonment for 'sabotage activity'. Ahmad Rubhi Sharbati, 28, was among a group of guerrillas, including an Israeli Jew, caught by security forces late last year shortly before they planned to blow up a big explosive charge in Occupied Jerusalem. He was found guilty of firing a Katyusha rocket at a Jerusalem suburb over a year ago.

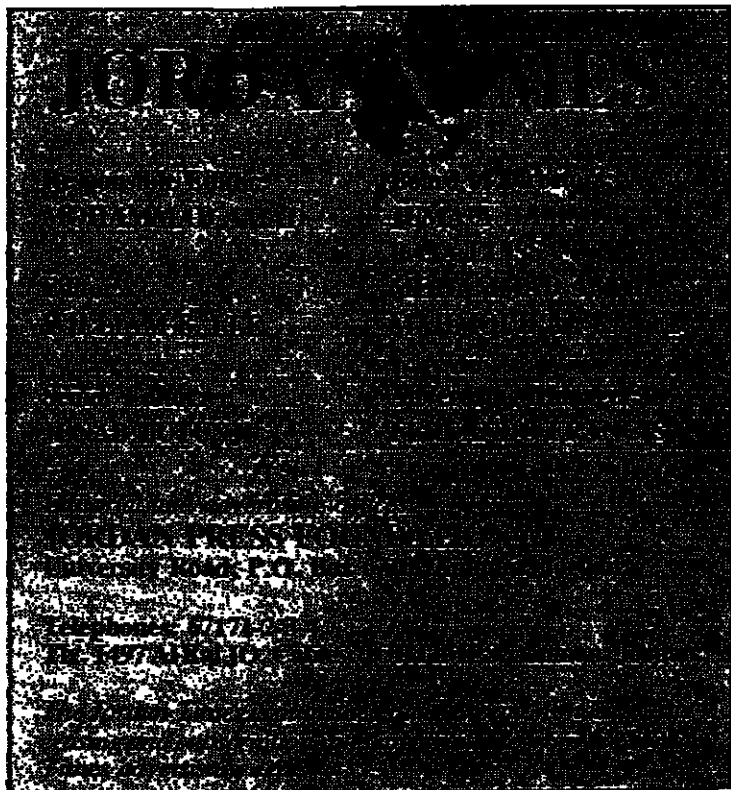
President Johnson's daughter files for divorce
AUSTIN, Texas, Jan. 19 (R)—The late President Lyndon Johnson's daughter, Luci Johnson Nugent—whose White House romance captured national attention—today filed for divorce from her husband of 12 years. The divorce is expected to be uncontested, and no grounds were listed. Mrs. Nugent and her husband, Patrick, who have three daughters, have been separated for about a year. Mr. Nugent recently resigned as general manager of an Austin radio station owned by the Johnson family, and has gone into the publishing business.

China to open consular ties with Tel Aviv

TEL AVIV, Jan. 19 (R)—China might open relations at the commercial or consular level with Israel before a peace agreement with Egypt was signed, the afternoon newspaper Maanin quoted a senior Chinese diplomat today as saying. The paper said the diplomat, whom it named as S.P. Liu based in New York with the Chinese United Nations mission, was in Israel last week to inspect U.N. peace-keeping forces. It quoted him as saying he had visited Peking three weeks ago and had raised the possibility of establishing China-Israel relations with foreign ministry officials there.

Assad, Ford discuss ME

DAMASCUS, Jan. 19 (R)—President Hafez Al Assad today explained to former U.S. President Gerald Ford Syria's views on the Camp David agreements between Egypt and Israel. Official sources quoted Mr. Ford as saying he and President Assad had discussed Middle East developments. President Assad gave a luncheon in honour of Mr. Ford, who left for Aswan after a four-hour visit. The poll showed that belief in the friendly attitude of Washington had declined from 84 per cent in September to 54 per cent now, while opinion in favour of President Carter had dropped from 67 per cent to 34 per cent. The poll showed that 67 per cent of Israelis now thought the U.S. favoured the establishment of a Palestinian state, compared with 41 per cent four months ago. Asked if they thought the U.S. could abandon Israel as it had abandoned Taiwan in favour of Communist China 53 per cent said yes, 31 thought no while 16 per cent were undecided, the poll reported.



Spiral of violence

Are we witnessing the run-up to another Arab-Israeli war?

That is one conclusion one can draw from the escalation of violence in recent days and weeks, culminating in yesterday's Israeli ground attack on southern Lebanon. It follows weeks of heightening tension within Israel, between Israel and Lebanon and among the rival Palestinian and Israeli-backed Christian factions within Lebanon.

It is no coincidence that the renewed violence occurs as the American-sponsored Egyptian-Israeli peace talks reach the make-or-break point, and as unity is reinforced within the Palestinian movement and on the Arab eastern front with Israel.

All the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict sense that the crisis is at a turning point. They are taking steps to secure their positions as if to face a coming storm.

For the Israelis this means dropping all pretence of peacemaking and pushing ahead with acts of aggression both in the occupied territories and against their weakest Arab neighbour—in short, spoiling for a fight.

For the Arabs, this means strengthening the common front against the enemy, stepping up vigilance against acts aimed at undermining unity and sorting out family quarrels: we see evidence of this in several meaningful events in recent days—the Palestine National Council meetings in Damascus, the consultations between His Majesty King Hussein and President Assad and the Syrian-Iraqi unification moves.

The Palestinians, facing the prospect of the legitimisation of their disenfranchisement and dispossession if the Camp David accords are put into effect, have decided to intensify their resistance to Israeli occupation. The Israelis will no doubt use this as a pretext for launching new acts of aggression.

That is the way the spiral turns. Our side, while heightening its readiness for any eventuality, has never failed to restate its desire for a peaceful solution, based on the formula of Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territory and recognition of Palestinian national rights.

The world should not let that simple, urgent message be obscured in the smoke from the latest Israeli acts of aggression against the Arab nation.

ARAB PRESS COMMENTARY

Commenting on the explosion in Mahane Yehuda street in Jerusalem Thursday morning, **AL DUSTOUR** Friday put the real responsibility on the Israeli leaders for this explosion and all other disasters that have happened and might happen in Palestine as a result of their "stubbornness, superciliousness and shortsightedness."

In the opinion of Teddy Kollek, the so-called Mayor of Jerusalem the time bombs which killed or wounded some 40 people was a "propaganda incident" designed to make big newspaper headlines. But Kollek could not understand that what happened in Mahane Yehuda was "the fruit of the Israeli tree of repression and tyranny planted in Palestine with the blood of the oppressed and their spoiled freedom—those who will never bow down to the usurpers of their land"—the newspaper says.

The Arabs, **Al Dustour** went on to say, have so long stated before all the world and in the international forums that the Palestine problem is the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and that there will be no peace without a just solution to this problem. But the Israeli leaders have closed their ears and persisted in their self-aggrandisement to the point of denying or, at best ignoring the existence of the people of Palestine.

As the Arabs have said time and again, Israel cannot possibly enjoy peace and keep the land at the same time, the newspaper stresses.

WHAT'S GOING ON

French Film

The French Cultural Centre presents a film entitled "Vipere au poing" adapted from a novel by Herve Bazin. The film starts at 7:30 p.m. and replaces the scheduled film "Souvenirs d'en France."

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Damas-Scene

Compiled for the Jordan Times by Pat McDonnell

(Week of Jan. 20 - 26)

EXHIBITS

When you view the expressionistic works of Nazir Ismael, it's clear you're not looking at pretty pictures. You also sense the intensity and dedication of a gifted artist who portrays life as he sees it. If you're interested in collecting works by Arab artists, you shouldn't miss Mr. Ismael's one-man show slated through Jan. 28 at the French Cultural Centre.

A graduate of the Fine Arts Academy of Damascus University, Mr. Ismael has had five one-man shows and has been featured in six collective international exhibitions. The dark world of Nazir Ismael is reflected in his pen and ink and watercolour portrayals of sad men staring from behind bars...even his pastoral scenes of Syrian cows and chickens imply doom. Nonetheless, his mixed media works have style; he is Syrian artist coming into his own.

Several of his works are executed in a series of panels containing distorted, often tortured, human faces. "I've tried to make a union between the artist and the spectator by portraying the faces as if they were on a film strip," Mr. Ismael said. "The viewer relates to photos because the camera is realistic, yet my semblance of film strips departs into expressionistic treatments of the human face. I hope the spectator views those faces and reflects upon his own problems. Much as we would like it otherwise, life is not the fairy tale happiness offered us in Hollywood fantasies; perhaps my work will make others contemplate reality."

Hours of the exhibition are 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.; 4:30 - 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, Jan. 20: An exhibition of sculptures by Asam Pasha opens for five days at the Arab Cultural Centre with a 6 p.m. reception. Born in Yabrud, Mr. Pasha received his training in Moscow. He teaches art in Damascus.

SUNDAY, Jan. 21: A one-woman show featuring 35 water colours and oils by Latakia artist Aline Geofroy opens with a 6 p.m. reception at Urna Art Gallery, ground floor of the Meridien Hotel. Ms. Geofroy studied at the Beirut Fine Arts Academy. Her work ranges from still lifes and portraits to Syrian landscapes.

MONDAY, Jan. 22: "Artesania Oriental" titles an exhibition of oriental carpets and antique jewelry at the Spanish Cultural Centre. Nabil Bassaleh and George Obeid are presenting the five-day exhibit which opens with a 6:30 p.m. reception.

TUESDAY, Jan. 23: Thirty oil paintings by Ghassan Jidid of Tartous go on view for 10 days at Al Sha'b Gallery. Mr. Jidid graduated from the Fine Arts Academy of Damascus University.

THURSDAY, Jan. 25: An exhibition by a Romanian artist will open with a short film during a 6 p.m. reception at the Arab Cultural Centre.

CONTINUING: "Treasures from Dresden" titles an exhibition of reproductions of famous paintings from Dresden art museums at the German Democratic Republic Cultural Centre through Jan. 30.



Damascene artist Nazir Ismael (right) discusses his works with viewers attending the opening of his one-man show at the French Cultural Centre.

LECTURES

TUESDAY, Jan. 23: A roundtable discussion on "Thirty Years of Mutual Economic Aid (COMECON) - Balance and Perspective" is slated for 6 p.m. at the German Democratic Republic Cultural Centre (in German and Arabic).

WEDNESDAY, Jan. 24: A lecture dedicated to G.E. Lessing on his 250th birthday will be delivered at 6 p.m. at the German Democratic Republic Cultural Centre (in Arabic).

THURSDAY, Jan. 25: A literary evening marking the 100th birthday of the Soviet writer Bajov (1879-1950) will be held at 6 p.m. at the Music Salon of the Soviet Cultural Centre (in Arabic).

FRIDAY, Jan. 26: A lecture in memory in Lenin is slated for 6 p.m. at the Soviet Cultural Centre (in Arabic).

THEATRE

CONTINUING: Mamduh Adwan's adaptation of "Man of La Mancha" is directed nightly by Mahmoud Hadour at Al Hamra Theatre. The cast from the National Theatre of Syria stars Abdul Latif Fathy, Farah Dipsey, Fida Samour, Abdelsalam Altaib and Salyum Haddad. Curtain time is 8:30 p.m. nightly except Friday (in Arabic).

The Experimental Theatre of Syria presents "The Way of Celebration" at 8:30 p.m. nightly except Friday at Abbasid Cinema next to the Semiramis Hotel (in Arabic).

VIDEO-TAPED PROGRAMMES

WEDNESDAY, Jan. 24: "Le temps partage", a programme devoted to French ballet, will be shown at 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. at the French Cultural Centre.

FRIDAY, Jan. 26: "Les caprices de Marianne" by Musset is slated for 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. at the French Cultural Centre.

FILM

SATURDAY, Jan. 20 and MONDAY, Jan. 22: "Les Créatures," a film directed by Agnes Varda starring Catherine Deneuve and Michel Piccoli, will be shown at 7:30 p.m. at the French Cultural Centre (in French, Arabic sub-titles).

SUNDAY, Jan. 21: "Emilia Galotti," a film based on a novel by G.E. Lessing, will be shown at 6:30 p.m. at the German Democratic Republic Cultural Centre (in German, Arabic and English sub-titles).

MONDAY, Jan. 22: "Lenin in October" is title of a documentary to be shown at 6 p.m. at the Soviet Cultural Centre (in Russian, Arabic sub-titles).

WEDNESDAY, Jan. 24: "Seventeen Minutes of Spring," a true-to-life film on World War II espionage, will culminate in the final chapter at 6 p.m. at the Soviet Cultural Centre (in Russian, Arabic sub-titles).

PAT-POURRI

FRIDAY, Jan. 26: The Soviet Cultural Centre will officially open its chess club in the name of Natsoly Karpov under the patronage of Syrian Minister of Defence Mustafa Tlass.

ELSEWHERE IN SYRIA

TUESDAY, Jan. 23: The noted British classical guitarist Julian Byzantine will perform works by Narvaes, de Mudarra, J.S. Bach, Giuliani, Rodrigo, Lennov Berkeley and Albeniz at 8 p.m. at the National Library of Aleppo. Born in London, Mr. Byzantine studied with John Williams at the Royal College of Music and attended master classes with Julian Bream. In Italy, he was chosen by Andres Segovia to give a solo recital at Sienna. He later joined the staff of the Royal Academy of Music and gained fame as a soloist and concert performer with the Royal Philharmonic. He is well-known as a broadcaster on the BBC and on independent television and is a recording artist as well.

If you have items for the Damas-Scene column, please send them ten days in advance to Pat McDonnell, P.O. Box 5601, Damascus, Syria.

U.S., German firms vie for Hijaz railway feasibility contract

By Rami G. Khouri
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN, Jan. 19--American and West German consulting engineering firms are best placed to win the contract for the feasibility study of what will probably be one of the Middle East's most demanding engineering jobs—rebuilding the 1,300-km-long Hijaz railway linking Damascus, in Syria, with Medina, in western Saudi Arabia.

This was revealed to the Jordan Times in an interview here yesterday by Transport Minister Ali Suheimat, who said that three of the eight shortlisted international consulting consortia have been asked to meet in Damascus in the first week of February to negotiate their terms with a three-man technical committee representing Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

One consortium will be selected then and the contract for the economic and technical feasibility study of the massive scheme will be signed in Amman before the end of February, in the presence

of the transport or communications ministers of the three Arab states jointly working on the railway reconstruction project. Mr. Suheimat said. The contract would have to be completed within 13 months.

He estimated the consulting engineering phase of the project, including the feasibility studies, the appointing of a consulting engineering firm or consortium of

firms, and the drawing up of the final designs and tender documents, would take nearly three years, and the actual construction phase of the project would require another five years.

He would not venture an estimate of the cost of the project, because this depended largely on the final configuration of the railway facilities themselves. The aim is to build an entirely new and

modern standard-gauge railway from Damascus to Medina, a distance of 1,300 kilometres, but it would be part of the feasibility study project to determine the optimum configuration, which could call for a single-track or a double-track railway, with various numbers and kinds of stations along the way.

Mr. Suheimat said the railway would be mostly used to haul freight between Europe and the states of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Arabian Gulf, though passenger traffic would also be carried, particularly during the annual Moslem hajj (pilgrimage) season.

He also said that Turkey would be contacted soon to discuss upgrading its railway system, which provides the critical link between Europe and Asia. It would be a bit silly to spend so much money rebuilding the Hijaz railway only to have the trains enter a bottleneck during their transit through Turkey, the minister said.

He said the costs of the project would be shared by the three states, but did not specify how this would be done.

He said, however, that this is expected to be "an economical project", in that it is supposed to be largely self-financing after it

starts working. Revenues from operating the railway would eventually cover its construction cost, he said, and it is one of the feasibility study's objects to determine the most economical means building and financing the project.

Commercial sources in Amman, who have had previous experience with railway projects in the Middle East estimate that the Hijaz railway project would cost in the neighbourhood of around \$1 billion at the very least, and could considerably more expensive the two-track configuration adopted.

Coming & Going

Minister of Labour

off to Qatar

AMMAN, Jan. 19 (JNA)--Minister of Labour Issam Ajlouni left for Doha this evening for a visit to Qatar at the invitation of his Qatari counterpart. The visit

comes at a time when ministers of labour in the Gulf states are holding a three-day conference starting tomorrow to follow up discussions on coordination among their countries and also between their countries and Jordan in the field of labour and social affairs. Discussions on the subject started during the meetings of the International Labour Organisation in Geneva last June and continued at the meetings of Arab social affairs ministers held in Baghdad last November.

North Korean delegation arrives

AMMAN, Jan. 19 (JNA)--A trade delegation from the People's Democratic Republic of Korea arrived here today for a four-day official visit to Jordan. During the visit its members will hold talks with Jordanian officials on ways of promoting trade and economic ties between the two countries. The delegation which is led by the North Korean under-secretary of trade is also expected to conclude contracts for the purchase of Jordanian products.



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The House of Languages is opening new Arabic courses for foreigners. They start on Monday, Jan. 22, 1979. Classes will be on Mondays and Wednesdays, from 4-6 p.m.

For more details, kindly call tel. no. 41986 Amman.

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Children plant seeds for future

Jordan Times photos
by Bill Lyons

AMMAN, Jan. 19 (J.T.)—An enjoyable day's outing today by several hundred people on a hillside northeast of Amman will bear fruit for future generations.

The occasion was a tree-planting ceremony at the Yajouz International Children's Forest, held under the patronage of His Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Her Highness Princess Sarvath. The King's daughter, Princess Alia, took part in the occasion, which was sponsored by the Friends of the Children Club as part of Jordan's celebrations marking the International Year of the Child.

The area designated for the forest was divided into sections in which Jordanian families and organisations, members of the diplomatic corps and of the international community in Amman planted seedlings of many different types of trees. In all, some 3,500 trees from Jordan and 1,000 brought in specially from abroad were planted. About a dozen foreign embassies planted trees from their countries.

Among those attending the ceremony were Sharif Nasser Ibn Jamil, the King's uncle, and his wife, who is President of the Friends of the Children Club.



HRH Princess Alia planted a tree in each of the different sections of the international forest.



One of the organisers from the Friends of the Children Club, Mr. Hatham Gussous, and family plant a tree in the Jordanian section.



It was, above all, a day for children.



Jordanian scouts, who also helped direct traffic to the site, are seen here in the French planting area.



One of the many young Jordanians who took part.



Soviet ambassador Rafiq Nizhanov plants a tree sent from the Black Sea coast.



British Ambassador John Moberley and company.



With loving care, a seedling is planted.



Princess Alia and her party arrive for the ceremonies.



Jordanian family doing their part for the effort.



Cub Scouts joined in the American contribution to the tree-planting day.



The Italian plot at the International Children's Forest.

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